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Benefits of National Forests to People of New Mexico

WALTER FRANK GOULD.

(Prize Winning Essay in University Contest for Theo. S. Woolsey, Jr., Prize.)

The Use Book defines the national forests as "large tracts of land, mainly mountainous and timbered, set apart to insure a perpetual supply of timber for home industries, to prevent destruction of the forest covers, which regulate the flow of streams, and to protect forest and range from monopoly or abuse in the hands of individuals." Henry S. Graves, chief forester, defines forestry as "the control of nature's powers by man for his own good." Of New Mexico's 78 million acres, approximately 19 million acres are in the national forests. That is, about one-eighth of the state, so it is seen that the practice of forestry is an excellent science to cultivate in New Mexico. Luckily the national forests were created before the work of the lumbermen had wrought much havoc, but the livestock industry had been going on for years, with a result of very poor range, and no conservation of water resources.

Prior to the establishment of the national forests, the lumbering industry in New Mexico was rapidly stripping the most available sections of the state of their trees. Had this still been going on, it would be impossible to estimate just how much forest there would have been left. Suffice to say that the trees were being ruthlessly cut, regardless of size or age, and the most valuable parts taken. It has been shown that the lumbermen used only one-third of the growing tree, and that the other two-thirds were left on the ground as waste.

Since the creation of the national forest, on the other hand, all timber to be cut on them comes under strict rules of the forest department. The provisions of timber sale contracts cover such important phases of forestry as care against injury to the young growth; low stump; as much of the tree utilized as possible; the removal of inferior trees, and the proper disposal of brush, that is, in piles for burning, or scattered evenly. Trees are carefully marked before cutting, being judged as to thickness, age and condition. Under this system, all mature timber is for sale and all dead trees can be taken free. Seed trees are always left to insure reproduction, and the trees are carefully culled to improve the condition and make-up of the forest. The latter proceeding always keeps the forest a permanent and very valuable asset to the country, while in the former way the land was stripped resulting in that much less forest land.

In places where the incursions of the lumbering industry have left barren spots before the advent of the national forests, and in places where on account of forest fires there is a scarcity of trees, the forest service is reforesting the area as fast as its facilities will permit and seedlings can be grown. The forest service has nurseries at Fort Bayard on the Gila national forest and at Gallinas on the Pecos national forest. Trees are grown from seeds at these places in quite large numbers. The seed is also directly planted in some places where the chances are favorable for their growing.

Before the advent of the national forests in New Mexico the lumberman left the cut-over land covered with a litter of his two-thirds waste of each tree. The first lightning storm or any other common originator of a fire that happened to strike the cut-over area would start a fire that would not only burn all this refuse, but consume with it all the young growth that had been too small to cut, leaving a barren waste which was absolutely ruined, as far as forestry was concerned.

Under the present system of the forest service all such left-over brush is put into piles and if the trees are

it is worth, not by a man who has driven his flocks of sheep to a good range for the summer preparatory to having them fine and fat for the fall. This is borne out by a knowledge of existing conditions in New Mexico prior to the advent of the national forests. The forests were rapidly being depleted, the range was badly overstocked and examples of erosion could be seen anywhere.

A cover of trees and the fallen needles and leaves under them, together with a good range of grass and bushes, makes a cover that will hold water when it does rain. To quote Mr. Woolsey, it acts like a blanket when water is poured on it, while water poured on a bare table is just like rain falling on a barren hillside, which is the cause of destructive floods. One writer states: "The conversion of run-off into underground seepage, and the checking of erosion, are the two essential forest influences which act together to control flood conditions." This is exactly what the forest service has been working for ever since it began in this state.

The conversion of the run-off into underground seepage insures a more permanent supply of water. It absorbs the water when it rains, and gives it out all during dry times. In regard to watersheds, the Use Book states: "The watersheds of streams supplying water for irrigation, municipal or domestic purposes may be closed to the grazing of any or all kinds of domestic stock, when necessary to prevent erosion and floods or diminution in water supply." The forest service has gone so far in the protection of watersheds that it has reforested several in New Mexico so as to insure to the people benefiting from those watersheds a permanent supply of water.

The most apparent and noticeable undertaking that the forest service has done for the people of New Mexico is in the building of permanent improvements. The forest service has built roads, trails and bridges for reader travel and transportation and the protection of the forests. Anyone familiar with New Mexico knows that these are the most needed improvements in the state. For the building of these improvements 10 per cent of the gross receipts are spent each year. Telephone lines built mainly for reporting fires, but for the use of the public also, are built, as well as drift and pasture fences. In 1903 the following permanent improvements were made: Fifty-three miles of roads; 237 miles of trails; 41 miles of telephone lines; 120 miles of fences. These same improvements have been going on each year since, but in an increasing ratio.

The forest service has just completed the improvements on the road from Albuquerque to the Taos ranger station on the Manzano national forest, and the Estancia valley. This gives Albuquerque motorists one of the finest and most delightful drives in the state, as well as furnishing a fine road to ranchers and farmers from the Estancia valley. What is now being done on the scenic highway on the Duff and Gila national forests. This road will be used a great deal by motorists journeying to the San Francisco exposition in 1915. The repairing of the same road where it crosses the Pecos and Jemez forests is now being contemplated.

In addition to all the improvements for the people of the state, the forest service gives each state 25 per cent of the gross revenue from that state each year. This money goes for the benefit of county schools and roads. For the fiscal year 1913 New Mexico received \$11,859 from the 10 per cent of the gross receipts, and \$29,619 from the 25 per cent. For the fiscal year 1914 New Mexico will get \$12,514 from the 10 per cent and \$31,284 from the 25 per cent of the gross receipts.

Under private management the forest lands were held as forest lands until the owners thought the time had come for cutting, or if the value increased enough they sold the land to them. There are thousands of acres of land in the forest section in New Mexico which are more valuable for agriculture than they are for forest purposes, but which under private ownership could never be accessible to farmers. All forest lands now under the control of the forest service are being classified as to what sections are more valuable for agriculture than forestry, and when this is finished every acre in the national forest that comes under this head will be open for entry. Quite a lot of very valuable agricultural land will be available on the completion of the work.

By the conservation of the forest and range the farmer in this state will have more water, both underground and surface, and have it more regular. The destructive floods will be a thing of the past, whose waters, instead, will gradually sink into the thirsty soil.

The mining industry, the most valuable industry in New Mexico, is greatly benefited by the national forests. When a miner shows that a claim is more valuable for mineral than for its trees, he can locate that claim, using all the timber on it if he desires for the use of his mine. If a free use permit he is able to use more timber in the vicinity of his claim. Any mine owner on the national forests is assured of a local supply of timber to meet his wants, thus eliminating any worry on his part as to where he will ship his timber from. The needs of the mining industry for timber for the present and future, are always considered in the formulating of plans by the forest service. The use of timber on the national forests primarily is for local consumption, and any demand of this sort is met with right at home. The forest service has given every encouragement to legitimate mining. It has prevented the illegitimate acquisition of lands under the guise of mining laws. It has made exhaustive studies in the preservation of mining timbers and the information being furnished is of great value to the mining industry.

Under the forest fire protection the mines on the national forests are also protected, giving them a great degree of safety from that source, and by having the watersheds protected, the mines are assured of a permanent water supply, a great boon in mining. In the matter of the protection of game, fish and birds, the forest service has cooperated with the state in a very efficient manner. All forest officers do as much work in this line as they can without interfering seriously with their regular duties. They

serve as deputy game wardens, having full power to enforce local laws. This is a very great help to the state, as it would be hardly practicable to post deputy game wardens in all of the out-of-the-way places of the state. Wild game adds materially to the enjoyment of the national forests by the public and the preservation of game animals, birds and fish is a public duty.

The forest service maintains two bird reservations in New Mexico, which serve as a refuge for birds, they being absolutely protected here. As to the destruction of predatory animals, the stockman's foe, the forest officers have been very active, each year the number of animals killed has been steadily growing less due to the decreasing numbers at large. In 1912 nine bear, 94 coyotes, 21 mountain lions, 39 lynxes and 26 wildcats were killed by forest officers, while in 1913 six bear, 34 coyotes, 3 mountain lions, 22 lynxes and 16 wildcats were killed, showing the decline in numbers.

In addition to all the preceding work being done by the forest service there are a few things which have not been touched upon. The forest service is constantly working on tree diseases and prevention of insects injurious to trees. In getting rid of all the diseased trees a forest can be built up that will gradually grow better and better, until it far exceeds the original forest, both in quantity and quality of timber produced. By also combating the vermin injurious to trees far healthier forests are being grown. The forest service is doing this sort of work in New Mexico all the time. Private owners of timberland, large or small, may secure the aid of the service in the care of their timber land and in planting. An examination is made for the owner, both from the viewpoint of the forester and the lumberman, and working plans are made for the specific needs of the owner. Many applications for this character of assistance have been received.

The traveling public receives careful consideration from the forest service, and when persons are traveling through the forests adequate divisions of the range are made for the provision of their draft saddle and pack animals. Camping grounds required for the accommodation of the public are closed to the grazing of stock.

For the preservation of objects of historic or scientific interest, the forest service creates monuments. One has been created at the Gila cliff dwellings, on the Gila national forest. This consists of 160 acres, which is preserved by the forest officers.

The forest service is doing an immense amount of good for the people of New Mexico. There is no other one department that is active along so many lines. The work of reclaiming the arid lands and bringing them under cultivation by irrigation will only be accomplished through the indirect work of the forest service. The conservation of New Mexico's supply of timber, the improvement of the stock industry, the building of roads and trails to every nook and corner of the state, the development of the mining industry, the preservation of game and fish, is and will be due to the great work of the forest service. For the development of the new state

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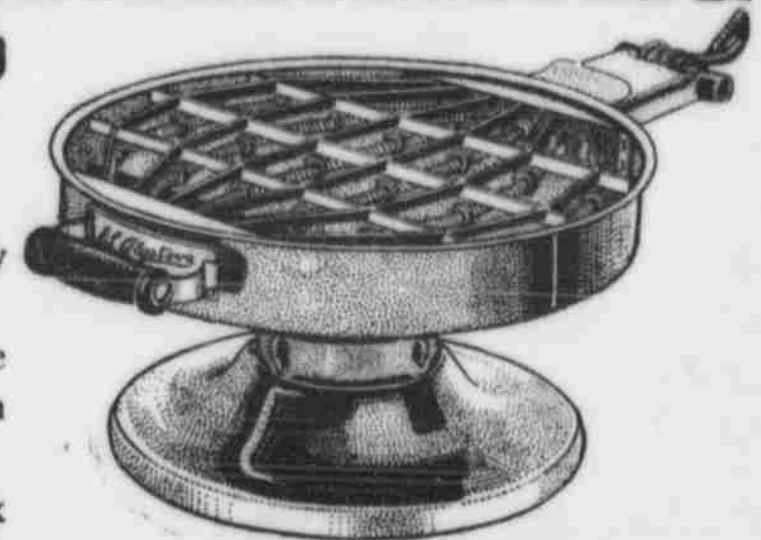
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Fifty Years of Effort to Connect Continents by All Land Wire Line

Washington, D. C., May 11.—Fifty years ago this summer, interest in the great project of connecting the American and European continents by land telegraph was at its height, and consummation of the undertaking was regarded as practically assured. The plan was to connect New York and London by way of the Bering Strait.

Although the first ocean cable was laid in 1857, there existed much skepticism regarding it, and as late as 1885 it was declared by many to be of no practical use. The enormous labor and cost of laying an ocean cable and the unsatisfactory manner of the working of these first laid gave rise to the opinion that failure would be the ultimate outcome.

Perceiving the wide demand for telegraphic communication between the two continents, Henry McDonald Collins, an American engineer of note, conceived the idea of an overland route. His plan was for a private company, backed by the United States government, to build a telephone line north from San Francisco and through British Columbia to Alaska to a point on Bering Strait nearest Siberian land. Simultaneously the Russian government was to build from St. Petersburg across Siberia to a point opposite the American terminal on Bering Strait.

Just how the wires were to be carried across the thirty or forty miles of water separating the two continents was never fully worked out, but a series of floating buoys, or small ships, firmly anchored, was thought to offer a solution of the problem.

The enterprise advanced in due time to the point where representatives were sent to St. Petersburg to lay the plan before the Russian government. Success attended the mission to the extent that a tentative agreement whereby the czar was to order the construction of the Siberian line whenever its practicability was demonstrated by the American promoters. Full permission was granted for an American engineering party to explore eastern Russia and the Great Siberian wilds for the purpose of locating a route and testing the feasibility of maintaining telegraph lines in that region.

Numerous surveys were made through British Columbia and Alaska, and a route was practically decided upon. Nearly all of the way it led through an uninhabited country, remote from sources of supply, and into a vast region locked in ice and snow.

From 1862 to 1865 many parties and expeditions were organized and sent out to explore and demonstrate. George Kennan, afterwards well known in the United States as a traveler and lecturer, joined one of the expeditions, when only 18 years of age, and spent over two years in Siberia, building and operating experimental lines. Kennan was an expert telegrapher, and his mission was to prove to the satisfaction of the governments and capitalists that telegraphic communication could be maintained constantly in the semi-polar regions.

In Siberia the Kennan expedition traveled thousands of miles by dog-sledge and on horseback, investigating climatic conditions and making surveys. His report to the czar and the American promoters was that the project was entirely feasible. It is said that the trans-Siberian railway subsequently followed much of the line marked out by the Americans.

It was while engaged in making further surveys, believing fully that the American end of the line was already under construction that a message, by courier from St. Petersburg, reached Kennan, informing him that the enterprise had been abandoned and ordering the expedition to return to the United States for discharge.

The successful laying and operation of the second Atlantic cable in 1865 blasted the hopes of the promoters of the American-Siberian line. Governments and capitalists looked coldly upon the great outlay necessary, and refused to finance further experiments. Thus, all of the expeditions were recalled and the promoting company dissolved. The irony of fate made it possible for Kennan, when he finally reached London, to send a message by cable to friends in America.

Viewed from the standpoint of fifty years ago, the project was one of the most gigantic ever considered by men. Today the undertaking is virtually accomplished, the only remaining link being the bridging of Bering Strait.

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NEW MEXICO BOARD OF PHARMACY IN SESSION HERE

Ten Applicants Trying to Win Certificates. Invitations to all State Druggists from El Paso Association.

The state board of pharmacy is in session in the N. T. Armijo building for the purpose of examining applicants for certificates. Ten entries druggists have filed applications. The board will be in session today, tomorrow and Wednesday.

The following members of the board, of which R. Ruppe, of this city, is secretary and inspector, are in attendance at the sessions: E. G. Murphy, president; Las Vegas, G. S. Moore, Roosevelt; T. N. Zook, Santa Fe; R. G. Dine, Las Cruces.

The board has received an invitation from the El Paso Retail Druggists' association to all the members of the New Mexico Druggists' association and all the other druggists in the state to attend the convention of Texas druggists at El Paso the 15th, 16th and 17th. The occasion is to be celebrated with many special features and an entertainment.

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